

COPYRIGHT WARNING

Notice: warning concerning copyright restrictions

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

A CRITIQUE OF THE NEW QUEST
OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS:

In Terms of Its Historical Approach,
Viewpoint, and Methodology

A thesis presented

by

Alexander McCurdy, III

in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity

Episcopal Theological School

April 1964

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	page 1
Chapter I: The Old Quest of the Historical Jesus...	6
Chapter II: Wilhelm Dilthey and the "New View" of History.....	13
Chapter III: Rudolf Bultmann's use of Dilthey and R. G. Collingwood.....	31
Chapter IV: The New Quest of the Historical Jesus	
Section I: Ernst Käsemann.....	43
Section II: Conclusions relating to the Failure of the New Quest.....	59

INTRODUCTION

The new quest of the historical Jesus, which has come into vogue only within the last ten years, was embarked upon to fill a gap which some biblical scholars saw as a result of R. Bultmann's existential interpretation of the gospel. Whether the new questers have been successful in providing us with a new picture of Jesus, or at least with a "negative" from which we might be able to "print" some picture of Him, is still being debated.

What is new in this new quest of the historical Jesus is not Jesus, but rather a "new" view of history which, supposedly, enables the scholar to get a new look at the man Jesus, or at least to get a look at Jesus' own "understanding of his existence, his selfhood, and thus in a higher sense his life."¹ As J. M. Robinson puts it: "If the possibility of resuming the quest lies neither in the kerygma, nor in new sources, nor in a new view of the Gospels, such a possibility has been latent in the radically different understanding of history and of human existence which distinguishes the present from the quest which ended in failure."²

¹James M. Robinson, A New Quest of the Historical Jesus. London, SCM Press Ltd., 1959, p. 72.

²Ibid., p. 66.

In discussing what in fact is making possible this new quest in the form of new historiographical approaches, Robinson refers to the work of Wilhelm Dilthey as the person whose idea of history and its possibilities are of prime importance for the whole undertaking. Robinson feels that there had been what he calls the "natural science" variety of historiography which was prevalent in the nineteenth century life of Jesus research and that the intent was to "establish causal relationships and to classify the particular in terms of the general."³ The era which the work of Dilthey ushers in Robinson calls the "modern period" of history. This is so named since the effort now becomes one to understand persons in history from the "inside." What he calls "historical encounter" has become the important thing and Robinson explains the results of this encounter in the following terms:

History is the act of intention, the commitment, the meaning for the participants, behind the external occurrence. In such intention and commitment the self of the participant actualizes itself, and in this act of self-actualization the self is revealed. Hence it is the task of modern historiography to grasp such acts of intention, such commitments, such meaning, such self-actualization; and it is the task of modern biography to lay hold of the selfhood which is therein revealed."⁴

The general fundamental question which poses

³Ibid., p. 67.

⁴Ibid., p. 68.

itself at this juncture and to which this thesis is directed is: given this "modern method" of historiography rooted firmly in the philosophy of Dilthey, as Robinson points out that it is, is it then in fact possible for modern biography to "lay hold of the selfhood" of an individual in history and ultimately, in particular, to that selfhood of Jesus himself? In brief; is it possible to get to the selfhood of Jesus, as Robinson would make us believe it is, by means of the methods described by Dilthey?

In the very recently published book edited by Braaten and Harrisville entitled The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ,⁵ it is extremely interesting to note one of their introductory comments about the present state of affairs in the new quest situation:

Our volume is intended to place the reader at the 'end of the beginning' of the new quest; that is, at that point at which discontent has set in respecting modern historiography's ability to provide a 'second avenue of access' to the historical Jesus. The majority of authors included, though representing slightly different to radically different perspectives, indicate their discontent with the new quest to the degree it is confident christological continuity can be anchored in the sources."⁶

It is to this discontent that this paper directs itself, suggesting the thesis that such discontent is

⁵Carl E. Braaten & Roy A. Harrisville editors and translators, The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ - Essays on the New Quest of the historical Jesus, Abington Press, 1964.

⁶Ibid., p. 7. Italics mine.

grounded in the fact that the historical approach which was to provide "a second access" is in fact not able to do so. Robinson, as noted above, bases the whole "possibility of a New Quest" on this new method of historiography, introduced by Dilthey, but from his rather confusing and shallow discussion of the method, it would appear that he is not aware of the severe limitations of Dilthey's method along the lines he, Robinson, would like to be using it.

By 1962 Van A. Harvey and S. M. Ogden had written an article for the Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche "Wie neu ist die 'Neue Frage nach dem historischen Jesus'?"⁷ in which they raised precisely the issue approached in this paper. In a footnote commenting on Robinson's appeal to a new historical avenue enabling the new quest to get off the ground the comment is made: "Robinson's appeal to the hermeneutics of Wilhelm Dilthey and R. G. Collingwood in support of his methodology is an interesting one. Further attention needs to be directed to the question of whether they can be utilized for this purpose."⁸

It is precisely this "further attention" which I hope to direct towards the utilization of Dilthey mainly, and Collingwood to a lesser degree, in the new

⁷This article is found, in English translation, in Braaten & Harrisville's The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ. All page numbers refer to the article as contained therein, pp. 197-242.

⁸Ibid., p. 240. Italics mine.

quest of Jesus of Nazareth,

Before moving into a discussion of this discontent with the new quest's possibilities and the reasons for it, it is best to briefly examine the old quest and some of the reasons for its failure. This provides the necessary background for what will follow.

CHAPTER I

In order to appreciate what has been happening in the so-called "New Quest of the Historical Jesus" in the last decade, the first thing to understand is that quest which came before it and which failed. It is agreed by many (J. M. Robinson, A. Schweitzer, H. Conzelmann to mention only a few) that the original quest was embarked upon in the nineteenth century in order to break free from the clutches of dogma and theological formulations about Jesus. It was the intention of the scholars of that century, particularly in Germany, to collect the fragmented glimpses of Jesus given in the Gospel accounts, and to weld these together into a picture, in fact a biography of Jesus. It was with such a "vivid" picture of Jesus in their hands that the questers of that period hoped to break free from the creedal and other doctrinal formulations which were found to be so inhibiting. As A. Schweitzer put it in his monumental work Von Reimarus zu Wrede (The Quest of the Historical Jesus) in 1906: "The historical investigation of the life of Jesus did not take its rise from a purely historical interest; it turned to the Jesus of history as

an ally in the struggle against the tyranny of dogma."¹

However, out of this inquiry came many results and reactions. First, the attempt of these liberal theologians to make this historical Jesus the ground of their belief and religion ran into many difficulties. Different people with differing interests in mind towards the man Jesus, whether these interests were primarily ethical, mystical, or whatever, came up with very dissimilar pictures of Jesus. As Schweitzer says in commenting about the various attempts at writing "lives": ". . . it was not only each epoch that found its reflection in Jesus; each individual created Him in accordance with his own character. There is no historical task which so reveals a man's true self as the writing of a Life of Jesus."²

Another incidental factor to be considered in connection with the first quest was the work of David Friedrich Strauss whose ideas and work called forth a re-invigorated effort to discover the historical man Jesus. His approach, which called forth renewed efforts by the "Life-of-Jesus" men, is clarified for us by N. A. Dahl: "The essential thing is the Christ idea, the idea of God-manhood, realized in the total history of the human race. What Jesus as a historical person was

¹Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, tr. W. Montgomery, third English edition reprint 1956, London, Adam & Charles Black, p. 4.

²Ibid.

or was not was therefore irrelevant."³ In connection with this it will be interesting to note below, when discussing the rise of the new quest, how the concern of the new quest arose out of a desire to fill a vacuum as far as the life history of Jesus was concerned, although a vacuum of a different sort.

Reacting to the work of Strauss, who dismissed any need for picturing the historical man Jesus, the questers intended to reconstruct a vivid picture of the man Jesus upon which one could base one's faith. It was felt that for a sure faith, what was needed was a sure historical idea of the man Jesus. J. M. Robinson sums up the intent of this school in these words:

The quest of the historical Jesus was originally the quest after "the Jesus of Nazareth who actually lived in first-century Palestine," unrestricted by the doctrinal presentations of him in Bible, creed and Church. One then proceeded to implement this alternative between orthodox christology and the Jesus of the enlightenment by appeal to the current alternatives in method. If the orthodox Christ was reached through faith and doctrine, it was readily assumed that "the real Jesus of Nazareth" could be found by means of the newly-discovered historiography promising to narrate the past "as it actually was". Hence for the nineteenth century the two meanings of "the historical Jesus" tended to coincide: "Jesus of Nazareth as he actually was" coincided with "the reconstruction of his biography by means of objective historical method".⁴

³Nils Alstrup Dahl, "The Problem of the Historical Jesus," 1953 Oslo, tr. Braaten & Harrisville in Kerygma and History, Nashville, Abington Press 1962, pp. 140-141.

⁴J. M. Robinson, op. cit., p. 28.

However, hand in hand with these new attempts to picture Jesus grew up the beginnings of serious investigations and questionings into the Gospel material. It began to become clear that a biography of Jesus could not be reconstructed out of the Gospel accounts and that the whole attempt to prove the truth of Christianity in this way was hopeless. Several things marked this change. Some examples: The Gospel of Mark, which had been considered to be a reliable source for the life of Jesus, was pointed out by Wilhelm Wrede⁵ to be concerned with things quite apart from pure biography. Also there was Julius Welhausen and the form critical approach which pointed to the need for understanding the gospel tradition in terms of its origin, sitz im leben, and intent. Then there was Martin Kähler who in 1892 made some significant conclusions in his lecture: Der sogenannte historische Jesus und der geschichtliche, biblische Christus.⁶ Kähler's work in this piece, it must be pointed out, was done while the old liberal quest was still in full swing, and the impact of what he was saying did not take effect immediately. But what he stated in this lecture held the basis for the end of that first quest.

⁵W. Wrede, Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien. (The Messianic Secret in the Gospels) Göttingen, 1901.

⁶Kähler, Der sogenannte historische Jesus und der geschichtliche, biblische Christus, 2. Auflage (Leipzig: A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1928). This has not yet appeared in English translation, but is, according to Braaten and Harrisville, shortly to appear in translation.

Kähler stated that the foundation of faith cannot be a scientifically reconstructed and therefore necessarily hypothetical historical Jesus, but rather must be a Jesus Christ as proclaimed by the apostles in the preaching which established the Church. The Gospels are not sources for the biography of Jesus, but rather are sermons on the Messiahship of the Crucified, "passion stories with a rather lengthy introduction."⁷

In sum, the gospels were found to contain not material for the life of Jesus, but rather preaching about the Christ of faith with historical information, as we think of it, clearly in the background. As Robinson puts it: "If we wished to summarize in one word these considerations which led to the view that the quest was impossible, we could speak of the discovery of the kerygma at the centre of the Gospels. It is only here that we reach the unifying factor in all the elements bringing the quest to an end."⁸

As seen in this failure of the nineteenth century quest based on the supposition that a Jesus of history could be picked out apart from a Jesus of faith, some other approach is necessary to the Gospel materials if the search for the historical Jesus is to be taken up again. Given the fact that the Gospels are kerygmatic pieces of writing, constructed with preaching intent by people who had another world view from ours and another view of the "objective fact" deemed so important in this age, the idea of finding the man Jesus in this material

⁷N. A. Dahl, op. cit., p. 147.

⁸J. M. Robinson, op. cit., p. 38.

presents a very difficult and unusual problem to the historiographer. How does one find out who the human Jesus was with only the Gospels to work with?

Several new ideas have been offered and attempts made to carry them out by various people and schools stemming mostly out of a so-called "existentialist" approach. Bultmann, of course, had no intention of writing anything resembling a life of Jesus since it was the basis of his whole approach that such a thing was more or less impossible to do given the nature of the materials. Hugh Anderson describes Bultmann's importance in both the rejection of the old quest while at the same time fathering an existentialist view of the Gospels:

Bultmann in fact directed a pincer-movement attack against theology's concern with the historical Jesus. First as existentialist theologian, he has discredited the significance for theology of Historie, and has asserted that the question about the historical Jesus is theologically illegitimate. Second as radical form-critic, he has affirmed the futility of the historical question, for the nature of the Gospel tradition is such that it is impossible to "see Jesus" through it or behind it.⁹

What is of interest here is what Anderson calls his work as "existentialist theologian." We see this very idea expressed by Bultmann himself in the introduction to his Jesus and the Word where he states that his intention is to ". . .lead the reader not to any 'view' of

⁹Hugh Anderson, "Existential Hermeneutics - Features of the New Quest," from Interpretation, April, 1962, p. 132.

history, but to a highly personal encounter with history!"¹⁰
Below we will investigate the method used by Bultmann and the sources he used in his approach. This in turn will lead to the so-called "post-Bultmannians,"¹¹ a group of his students, who have moved forward to propose a new quest utilizing and expanding on Bultmann's existentialist approach to the Gospels, but also reacting to some of its limitations.

It is, finally, the historical philosophy behind the new quest which is important to understand and which has yet not been fully and critically examined. It is the supposedly new historical approach and what the new quest hopes to gain, through its use, regarding the historical Jesus which I will attempt to define, present, and evaluate. The new quest is already in its eleventh year if we mark its beginning with the lecture given by Ernst Käsemann in 1953. Since that time attempts have been made to implement Käsemann's challenge. To a great extent all the findings which these scholars have come up with result from their new view of what history the Gospels do contain, and of how this Jesus-history can be determined. The place to begin in order to see the raw material for their historical approach, is with the ideas of Wilhelm Dilthey.

¹⁰Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, tr. Louise Pettibone Smith & Erminie Huntress Lantero, New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1934 & 1958, p. 6.

¹¹This term is used by Robinson in the introduction to his book on the New Quest referring to pupils of Bultmann, p. 10 ff.

CHAPTER II

The influence of Wilhelm Dilthey, 1833-1911, son of a German protestant pastor, has been increasingly felt in this generation. Although Heidegger felt the influence and significance of his thought, (as indicated by the following taken from Being and Time: "'Fundamentally the following analysis of temporality and historicity is solely concerned with preparing the way for the assimilation of the researches of W. Dilthey which the present generation has yet to achieve,'"¹), Dilthey has not until recently received the attention which matches the scope and significance which his work deserved. However, we know that not only was Heidegger influenced by him in his existential philosophy, but in relation to the discussion here, we know of Bultmann's indebtedness to his work and findings, not to mention the use made of his basic ideas and philosophy, although perhaps unduly, by the "New Questers" as pointed out for us by J.M. Robinson in his work on the subject.²

As H. A. Hodges, one of Dilthey's most interested commentators, says about the man's work:

¹This reference to Heidegger is made by H. P. Rickman in his introduction to Meaning in History - W. Dilthey's Thoughts on History and Society. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1961, pp. 18-19.

²J. M. Robinson, op. cit., pp. 67-68.

Dilthey was the first writer to set speculative questions aside and study the process of sympathetic understanding soberly and scientifically. He showed how analysis, clear definition, and systematic exploration of the object play a determinative part in it also, as well as in the method of natural science, and that the two methods, though different, are not antithetic.³

That scientific and sympathetic avenues of methodological approach are different, there is little question. That they are antithetic is open to question and is indirectly one question open to discussion in this paper.

Thus it behooves one to see what it is that Dilthey is saying since clearly, what he has to say speaks to the question of an historical methodology which might open an avenue of approach to a fuller understanding of the man Jesus in the Gospel accounts.

Dilthey's concern was with something called "human studies" and by this is meant, generally, those areas of the so-called "inner-man" which history had not taken into account up to that time. John Macquarrie makes the following useful comment indicating the basic nature of the man's position:

Basic to Dilthey's point of view is the distinction which he makes between the natural and the human sciences. In the natural sciences we are, so to speak, spectators who look on from the outside. We observe the phenomena and describe their regularities without entering into them or knowing them in their inner reality. In the human sciences, on the other hand, we know the subject-matter - man's experience itself - from the inside, for we all live through

³H. A. Hodges, Wilhelm Dilthey - an Introduction. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1944 & 1949, p. 13.

experience. Of course, human behaviour can be studied from the outside also, but in that case we miss what is distinctive in it.⁴

It is evident to see how Robinson has closely followed Dilthey's reasoning here as far as seeing a "Nineteenth-century historiography and biography. . . modelled after the natural sciences. . . ,"⁵ while the new historiographical methods enable us to see "the distinctively historical and human, where transcendence, if at all, is to be found."⁶ However, on several grounds, it appears that Dilthey's ideas may be called into question, and especially will this be true when we see how the new quest biblical scholars attempt to use his methodology to capture the selfhood of Jesus himself. How Dilthey proposes to come to any understanding of selfhood is the first thing to understand about his approach.

We may begin by saying that Dilthey assumed it to be the historian's concern to find and tell the meaning in history. With this as a fundamental goal, Dilthey built his "system" on the contention that man in any generation experiences life in terms of various patterns, connections, and relationships and, that it is these elements which give meaning to human life; to

⁴ John Macquarrie, Twentieth-Century Religious Thought, New York & Evanston: Harper & Row, 1963, p. 123.

⁵ J. M. Robinson, op. cit., p. 67.

⁶ Ibid.

our human life in the present as to that of those in the past. Everything we observe and experience day to day, all the feelings which we have of joy and sorrow, all the places and facts of our environment which we experience recognize and affect: all these things of mind and world about us add up to the "ways in which we experience the world as meaningful."⁷

This is a fairly understandable concept and what Dilthey has done with this observation of the present reality and condition of man constitutes the basis of his historical approach. "Step by step," as Rickman describes it,

Dilthey analyzed the temporal and historical structure of human life and the way in which meaning arises in it, how this meaning is expressed and how it can be understood. He then proceeded to an account of how the meaning rooted in the awareness of individuals becomes embedded in the meaning of institutions, organizations and historical processes, what form it takes there, how it can be recaptured through historical evidence and lead to historical understanding.⁸

As this statement of Rickman's points out, Dilthey is describing a three fold process: first humans experience life in some way which is meaningful to them, second this experience is very often followed by some sort of expression, written or otherwise, but recorded in some permanent form; and third, this expression of the ex-

⁷H. P. Rickman, op. cit., p. 31.

⁸Ibid., p. 33.

perience is later subjected to analysis by another human being who then "understands" it. Dilthey himself describes the inter-relatedness of these three "events": "More and more, in these ways, the meaning of the relations between lived experience, expression, and understanding reveals itself. What arises unreflectingly in lived experience is, in the expression, as it were dragged forth from the depths of mental life. For the expression wells up out of the soul immediately, without reflections, [here, no doubt, he is talking about some sort of "imaginative art or psychic" expression to be discussed below] and then by virtue of its fixity remains to be understood;. . ."⁹

The question which remains to be explained is the "how" of all this; how does one "understand," in the sense in which Dilthey means the word, these expressions and the people who have made them, and to what depth does this "understanding" go. It will be necessary to take these two questions up separately: first the "how," and then the "depth" of understanding possible will be touched upon below when discussing the different modes of expression.

Coming to an "understanding" of meaningful events in the past is possible for man today precisely because he is man and thereby still involved in meaningful experience in the present. Thus, it is quite

⁹W. Dilthey, taken from Hodges, Wilhelm Dilthey - an Introduction, op. cit., pp. 117-118.

possible for man to identify with and recognize similar "meaningful" experiences which have happened in the past and whose record he possesses in some form of concrete expression. All men share in common what he calls: "Objective Mind." As Rickman says about this view of Dilthey's, "The contexts in which individuals stand can be understood. . . in a way analogous to that in which we understand individuals because they consist of relations between human beings and creations of the human mind."¹⁰ In other words, the tie and bridge for understanding between the man of today and the man of 100 or 1000 years ago is the human mind. It is as if the historian of today brings himself into an "I-Thou" relationship with the figure in history. Dilthey even uses the expression "I-Thou" in connection with this very idea, when talking about what he calls the "Objective Mind and Elementary Understanding":

I have shown what objective mind means for the possibility of knowledge in the human studies. I understand by it the manifold forms in which the common background subsisting among various individuals has objectified itself in the sensible world. In this objective mind the past is for us a permanent enduring present. . . . For everything in which the mind has objectified itself contains in itself a factor common to the I and to the Thou. . . . Hence follows a conclusion which is of importance for the process of understanding. The expression of life which the individual apprehends is to him as a rule not simply this particular expression, but is as it were filled with a knowledge of a common background and with a relation to an inner reality

¹⁰H. P. Rickman, op. cit., p. 41.

given in this common background.¹¹

Dilthey thus realized that all men share, to some considerable degree, a common background. It is in discovering what this background is, and then in comprehending it, that history takes on a new depth of meaning, since a new depth of understanding has been reached.

Dilthey suggests that it is partly through the use of our imagination, in examining the common background of shared meaningful experiences in life, that enables us to make contact with a certain figure in history. This, according to Rickman, does not turn out to be as subjective and haphazard as it may seem to be at first, but the truth of this will be discussed below. Here again what is involved is an entering into the life-situation of the historical person we are trying to understand. We view the circumstances surrounding him, in addition to the evidences and documents referring to him, but then furthermore, where the imagination plays its part, is in our entering into that person attempting to apprehend what his purposes, and state of mind were. The object is to grasp the relationship between the "intention, action and the ensuing actual consequence" concerning that historical person.

The three words which Dilthey used to describe the acts making up this "imaginative" bridge to under-

¹¹Hodges, Wilhelm Dilthey - an Introduction. op. cit., pp. 118-120, the quote is from Dilthey.

standing were: "Projection, Reproduction, and Reliving." We project ourselves into the past and our soul "treads the wonted paths on which of old, in response to kindred life-situations, it enjoyed and suffered, desired and acted."¹² In doing this, we reproduce the situation, and in reproducing it we are thus able to relive it and come to an understanding of it in a much deeper sense.

Before moving to discuss how "deep" a level this understanding reaches, it is important to say a brief word about what Dilthey deems necessary in terms of the "facts of history" surrounding an event or person before any "understanding" can be obtained. This can best and most quickly be seen in a brief paragraph taken from Hodges describing Dilthey's emphasis on what might be called the normal scientific historical investigation as a necessary prerequisite for any attempt at the so-called "sympathetic understanding" which we have discussed above.

The historian's work, he says, begins with philology, which comprises the study of the languages in which the sources are written, together with the textural criticism and chronological arrangement of the sources themselves. Then follows the interpretation of the sources, the full understanding of what they are meant to convey. Then comes the reflection upon this information, collation of various sources, and the attempt to produce a coherent and intelligible account of the processes described in them. These various stages in historical enquiry do not form a linear sequence, but are carried out pari passu, and stand to one another in a relation of

¹²Ibid., p. 121-122.

reciprocal dependence. That is why Dilthey says in one passage that philology is not a mere aid to the historian, but is actually an integral part of his procedure, "the ground-science of history". . . .¹³

This points up the need which Dilthey saw for a definite factual background which needs to be present before the act of interpretation and understanding can take place. Note that it is quite clear that by "source" he is not thinking of something like the gospels, which at best are a secondary account of the man Jesus' life. Dilthey is thinking about a source directly related to the person under investigation, not a "believing report" about this person.

However, even under the most ideal circumstances, there is some debate regarding the depth to which this "understanding" can go, not only as we interpret Dilthey's ideas today, but also with regard to what he himself thought was possible.

This dilemma becomes perfectly clear when we look at the three forms of expression in which he sees past experience recorded. It is important to see what types these expressions are and what are the possibilities for "understanding" which each form offers. His whole system seems to hang on this issue of whether "understanding" on the level of inner-selfhood can take place on the basis of the available expressions. Dil-

¹³H. A. Hodges, The Philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1952, p. 155.

they points out that there are three differing types of expression. These we will examine separately.

First, there is the general heading of expression in the form of "concepts, judgments, and greater thought-constructions."¹⁴ These are expressed in concrete forms in the course of history, thus we have "words, sentences, and written treaties, whose business is to express 'concepts, judgments and greater thought-constructions.'"¹⁵ As far as comprehending what these ideas and concepts are in themselves, this is not a difficult task. However, as for understanding anything about the motives which inspired any particular idea or concept, we can gain little if any knowledge or understanding of what went on in the person's self, which inspired the idea or concept.

The second category is made up of human acts. In this Dilthey supposes, and to some degree correctly, that from an act one can deduce the purpose behind that act. But here again we find a certain limitation of the possibilities for "understanding." For example, if we have a written historical account of someone crossing a street we are able to deduce with some degree of certainty that the purpose of this act was to get the person to the other side of the street. If we know more of the circumstance than just the description of the act itself, (i.e. that it was a hot day and there was a juicy water-

¹⁴Ibid., p. 129, quote from Dilthey.

¹⁵Ibid.

melon on the other side), we can go on to say more about the purpose behind the man's wanting to cross the street. However, there is a definite limit to the depth of understanding to which we can come through these circumstances and especially a limit to the accuracy attainable in getting any real picture of this man's inmost selfhood and motives. There are far too many variables possible to do this in such situations, or as Hodges puts it, "The one possibility which was actualized does not tell us what the others were, how the man would have acted in other circumstances, i.e. what manner of man he really is."¹⁶

Thus again, in this second instance, we are able to arrive at a certain factual assurance about the man's action and general purpose, but for inner motivation or selfhood, we still have few clues.

It is very important that we grasp well the meaning of the third class, since much rests on a proper understanding of its possibilities and method in grasping the invalidity of the new quest. This class of expression is described by Dilthey as Erlebnisausdrücke^c which means: "vital expressions or expressions of lived experience." There are two "sub-classes" of this type of expression: one is an "imaginative work," the second is any spontaneous form of expression or "psychic expression." Hodges clarifies these two types for us: "Psy-

¹⁶Ibid., p. 131.

chic expressions are those spontaneous expressions by exclamation, tone of voice, gesture, bodily attitude and the like, which are in essence common to all mankind. These do in fact express emotions. Imaginative expressions are conscious, controlled, reflective expressions, and the most outstanding examples of them are works of art."¹⁷

One thing which we might note about this class, and especially about the "psychic type," is the possibility, which Dilthey points out, that these might also occur, mixed in subtle forms with the first of the three types of expression, mentioned above: concrete scholarly statements. (How this might relate to Jesus research is explainable in the following way. If we can momentarily think of the kerygmatic nature of the Gospels, being, as it were, "concrete scholarly kerygmatic statements" about Jesus, then it is also conceivable, in these terms, to look for an original "psychic expression" made by Jesus himself and preserved in the kerygmatic Gospels. Below we will note how the new questers have done just this. They have searched for such authentic Jesus material as might be found in, or related to a genuine "psychic expression" of Jesus still contained in the Gospels.)

A second thing to note about these expressions is that there is some possibility that the "inner self-

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 131-132.

hood" of the creator might be preserved in his creative expression. Dilthey feels that this can be true in connection with artistic expression. However, apart from this type of artistic expression Dilthey sees far less hope that what is being expressed really conveys the author's inner self. As he puts it: "'What arises out of daily life stands under the power of its interest. What is continually falling away into the past has its interpretation also determined by the hour. There is something disquieting in the fact that, in the battle of practical interest, every expression may deceive, and also the interpretation alters as our attitude changes.'"¹⁸

Join this to the following remark and we come to realize quite clearly the limitations which Dilthey himself saw, at certain times, about the possibilities of getting to inner selfhood even under the most ideal circumstances: Even with the genuine art form he says that "'It offers no information about the author at all. . . . So there arises in the confines between knowledge and action a circle in which life discloses itself at a depth inaccessible to observation, reflection, and theory.'"¹⁹

Finally, then, in this last category, Dilthey recognizes little ground for hope in "understanding" the

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 132-133.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 133.

selfhood of the author of one such expression, even in the case of the artist. Thus, what problem the new quest will have to face, (Robinson, Käsemann and the others don't seem to have faced this problem as yet.), is summed up in the following: given one of the types of expression mentioned by Dilthey, given his recognition of the necessity to establish certain "scientific" facts concerning the expression and the expressor, and finally given Dilthey's "tie of the minds" mode of "understanding"; it is then not at all certain whether the inner motives of this person, his inner self, in fact his very being, is open for discovery or whether we are limited to a mere understanding of what the expressor meant to say in his expression. That we can get to a "meaning level" of understanding is fairly certain, but whether we can get to a "motive level" is not at all sure!

Hodges at one point asks the penetrating question: "Is it really true that 'life embraces life' except in a quite superficial sense? Do we really find our way to the ideas and motives of historical agents, so as to reconstruct the inwardness of the process of events? Have we enough evidence to guide us in this, and to overcome what must always be the historian's temptation, to over-simplify?"²⁰ (The negative answer to these questions turns out to be a rather crucial one when we will see below its effect on the philosophy and

²⁰ Ibid., p. 154.

outcome of the new quest.)

Hodges also mentions a criticism of Dilthey's work made by Heinrich Rickert, another nineteenth century German philosopher, which points up even further this limitation set on the knowledge obtainable about the selfhood of an historical person which can be derived through Dilthey's approach. Rickert was convinced that a "meaning-complex" in history could be understood: that is, what happened and what it meant. As far as a "motive-complex" went, this he considered to be beyond the possibilities of historical investigation. In spite of the possibilities which he did see for his approach, Dilthey at times admits to this limitation, as seen in the following words of his: "'Historical scepticism . . . can only be overcome if our method has no need to count on the discovery of motives.'"²¹ While Hodges seems to make an attempt to show that Dilthey did believe he could arrive at an estimate of a character's inner will and motives, this conclusion is not tenable.²²

Above all, the entire method of Dilthey, when applied in an attempt to get at an historical person's selfhood, seems to be completely at the mercy of the complex human mind. More often than not these complexities

²¹Ibid., p. 156.

²²I share Harvey's and Ogden's opinion on this matter voiced on p. 240 of "How New is the 'New Quest of the Historical Jesus'?", Braaten & Harrisville, The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ, op. cit.

even defy the efforts of an expert attempting analysis while the person is yet alive. How much more difficult it must be to understand him years after his death through the medium of various historical records which have been left behind by that human being. Hodges brings up some ideas at one point which stand as most imposing statements of reality and concerning the ultimate failure of Dilthey's approach in the realm of motives: "How many things there must be lurking, unrevealed and perhaps never to be revealed, whose detection would overthrow the facile reasonableness of accepted histories! It is never easy to show that any action has a rational motive; but the sway of passion, prejudice, and all irrational forces over human life is inexhaustibly wide."²³

Further, he comments again including a remark from Dilthey: "The individual is largely in the dark even as to his own motives, and those who report his actions from without are even less in a position to judge. 'What influence of private interest, ambition, lust of power, pride enters into decisive actions, can be decided only within modest limits. Even verbal or epistolary statements on this point remain questionable.'"²⁴

Drawing our discussion of Dilthey to a close and moving beyond these individual limitations of his ap-

²³H. A. Hodges, The Philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey, op. cit., p. 154.

²⁴Ibid., p. 156.

proach, perhaps the one thing which we can settle on most inhibiting the success of what he is trying to do in historical research, is his lack of some sort of objective historical methodology. It is true that man has become aware of the fact that the essential meaning of history goes beyond the mere recitation of facts and that the true meaning of history lies to a degree in the minds of the human beings who acted in or enacted the historical events. The problem is that Dilthey does not offer a successful method to attain to an understanding of these things.

As Hans Meyerhoff says at one point about the meaning which such men as Dilthey and Collingwood saw in history: "History was a 'spiritual' realm, by which they meant that the ultimate constituents of the historical world were human thoughts, purposes, motives, and actions, not natural, social, or institutional factors, and that the aim of a genuine historical work was to reconstruct these 'spiritual' facts in their original meaning."²⁵ Apart from the dubious fact that these men could actually accomplish in any way the reconstruction of the "spiritual facts," the question also stands out concerning some concrete methodology by which to accomplish it.

If, as apparently seems to be the case, the truth

²⁵Hans Meyerhoff, The Philosophy of History in Our Time, Garden City, N. Y., Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959, p. 36.

of history is found to be cradled in the subjective mind of individuals, then the questions which pose themselves are: how do we investigate the subjective objectively, or does the subjectivity of something rule out the possibility for objective research, or finally - does our own subjectivity, our biases and prejudices - keep us from objective research? This, no doubt, is not a new question, but is one which is worth considering with renewed interest in this age when so much research is being done on the human mind, conscious and subconscious. If we are capable of coming to an understanding of ourselves, our own motives, and thereby our own selfhoods, then how can this help us get to the selfhoods of people who have lived before us. However, Dilthey's methods and ideas lead us only far enough to see and grasp these questions. We are still far from being able to grasp the inner selfhood, intentions and "motivation complex" of any individual in history.

It is with this in mind that we can proceed to see how Dilthey has come to be used in biblical studies, first by Bultmann, and then by the new quest school itself.

CHAPTER III

It was, to some considerable degree, through the work of Rudolf Bultmann that Dilthey's ideas were incorporated into the debate concerning history and the gospels. For Bultmann, in his existential approach to the interpretation of the Gospels, relies not only on Heidegger, but on Dilthey's idea of history and its significance for us as we read history, get involved in it, and re-live it existentially. To see Dilthey's influence on Bultmann, one has only to read the latter's essay on "The Problem of Hermeneutics" which appeared in 1950.¹ In the second place, it will also be important to see what Bultmann has to say in his volume entitled History and Eschatology The Presence of Eternity, a series of lectures delivered at the University of Edinburgh in 1955.² It is interesting to note here how Bultmann has apparently discovered the writings of the English historian Collingwood, and how he can tie in Collingwood's ideas on historical interpretation with

¹Rudolf Bultmann, "The Problem of Hermeneutics," in Essays an English collection; tr. James C. G. Greig, London and Beccles: William Clowes and Sons, Ltd., 1955. The essay first appeared in the Z. T. K. in 1950.

²Rudolf Bultmann, The Presence of Eternity, History and Eschatology, Gifford Lectures in 1955. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957.

those of Dilthey's, both of which do show some degree of similarity.

First in the essay on "The Problem of Hermeneutics" Bultmann reveals immediately his indebtedness to Dilthey. Macquarrie reminds us of the importance of Dilthey's influence in the revival of interest in hermeneutics by saying: "Dilthey's view of history brings him to the problems of interpretation, and he revived the science of hermeneutics, neglected since Schleiermacher's time."³ Bultmann then proceeds to a definition of the problem which hermeneutics sets out to solve. As he puts it: "it is the question of the possibility of attaining to objectivity in understanding individual human being namely of the past. . . . Thus hermeneutics would be the science of understanding history in general."⁴

Bultmann points out that in interpreting a recorded event in history such interpretation will be colored by what presuppositions we bring with us to that task; in other words, we have some question formulated in our minds before we begin. But it is precisely this question in our minds which provides us with the bridge to the mind of the one we hope to interpret in any historical record. As Bultmann puts it:

³John Macquarrie, Twentieth-Century Religious Thought, op. cit., p. 124.

⁴R. Bultmann, "The Problem of Hermeneutics," op. cit., pp. 234-235.

The formulation of a question . . . arises from an interest which is based in the life of the inquirer, and it is the presupposition of all interpretations seeking an understanding of the text, that this interest, too, is in some way or other alive in the text which is to be interpreted, and forms the link between the text and its expositor. So far as Dilthey characterizes the relationship between author and expositor as the conditioning factor for the possibility of comprehension of the text, he has, in fact, laid bare the presupposition of all interpretation which has comprehension as its basis.⁵

Bultmann, however, goes on to stress the importance of determining what is the nature of that presupposition which we have in our mind, the one which is also expressed in the text. Understanding then takes place after we have determined the relationship in our own lives to that same idea expressed in the text. My relation to the subject in question should be the same as the relation of the historical character's relation to the same subject, therefore I understand him and his relation by understanding my own first.

To be able to follow this idea which Bultmann is expressing here, one must recall Dilthey's idea of "understanding" and how he supposes that human minds are the connecting link in historical understanding. This leads to the fact that if I react in "such and such" a way to a fixed subject today, the man of 100 years ago will probably share some of the same fundamental reactions, cultural and age differences being taken into consideration.

⁵Ibid., p. 240.

The illustration which Bultmann uses effectively in this connection is the translator of languages. He is able to translate because he shares a basic knowledge or impression of things about him in physical or mental life. That a Russian and a Frenchman both know, for example, what a window is, that they have experienced it and put their head through one, or closed and opened one, gives a basic grounding in shared life-experience which thus permits communication and finally translation in terms of words. Through this illustration of window, it is not difficult to see that in appreciating my relationship to a window I can thereby appreciate any other human's appreciation of it, to some degree. "Interpretation," as Bultmann puts it, "always presupposes a living relationship to the subjects which are directly or indirectly expressed in the text."⁶

However, it is what can happen once we enter sympathetically into relationships with events or people in the past which interests Bultmann. It is through our interpretation participating in the historical person or event that "comprehension of the possibilities of man's being"⁷ become revealed. That is to say, through an understanding of the possibilities of the human being in history, we come to discover our own possibilities and beings to a new and greater depth. Bultmann ex-

⁶Ibid., p. 242.

⁷Ibid., p. 246.

presses this nicely in the following:

Real understanding would, therefore, be paying heed to the question posed in the work which is to be interpreted, to the claim which confronts one in the work, and the 'fulfilment' of one's own individuality would consist in the richer and deeper opening up of one's own possibilities - in being called forth out of one's self (that is, out of one's incomplete, inert self which is always falling into the danger of persistent devotion to the status quo) by the work.⁸

What is being called for here, then, is a personal involvement in history out of which can come a deep understanding of the possibilities available to one's self in the present: finding out what history's claim on us is.

Bultmann faces the question of the "subjective" nature of this whole process (and therefore its possible invalidity), through the reason that although any given interpretation made by an individual might differ from any other interpretation made by another individual, this does not necessarily indicate the individual's bias alone. Rather, what the multiplicity of interpretations more certainly reflects is the multitude of aspects which any event in history is bound to present. It is true that any individual might choose to dwell on one aspect of an historical event, but this is because that particular aspect of the event is one of many and also happens to be the one which speaks to him in his exis-

⁸Ibid., p. 251.

tence. As Bultmann explains this concept:

The history of each phenomenon, corresponding to its complex nature, present different aspects - that is, gains significance or, better, makes a claim in several directions. And in history each interpreter, to correspond with the motifs at work in the multifariousness of life in history, attains that formulation of the question in which the phenomenon has something to say specifically to him.⁹

Below, there will be some mention of the dangers of subjectivity in interpretation and on the efforts to interpret without the influence of personal "interest" playing on interpretation. It is interesting, as a consequence to see Bultmann's position in this light, making note of the following remarks by Bultmann, especially in the light of Krister Stendahl's opinions on the subject:

The demand that the interpreter must silence his subjectivity and extinguish his individuality, in order to attain to an objective knowledge is, therefore, the most absurd one that can be imagined. It is sensible and right only in so far as we mean by it that the interpreter must silence his personal wishes with regard to the outcome of the interpretation. . . . Just as the interpretation of a work of poetry and of art can only be a success for those who allow themselves to be touched by it, so the comprehension of a political or sociological text can only be such for those who are stirred by the problems of political and social life.¹⁰

What this leads Bultmann to conclude is, in effect, that only in subjectivity is there any real objectivity in

⁹Ibid., p. 255.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 255-56.

the interpretation of history: "The 'most subjective' interpretation is in this case the 'most objective,' that is, only those who are stirred by the question of their own existence can hear the claim which the text makes."¹¹

What all this obviously leads Bultmann to, is the application of this method to the biblical writings. In answer to the obvious question of what knowledge we have of God "naturally," so to speak, (with which we can identify and which could provide a connecting link with the ideas transmitted in the biblical writings as well as providing a connecting link between us and the possibilities presented to us in the writings) he makes it clear that we have an innate knowledge described in the following way: "In human existence an existentiell knowledge about God is alive in the form of the inquiry about 'happiness,' 'salvation,' the meaning of the world and of history; and in the inquiry into the real nature of each person's particular 'being.'"¹² It is because of this "existentiell knowledge," which man possesses, that in the biblical writings he is able to understand what is being said there and is thereby presented with various possibilities for his own life and existence. With this idea we come to the end of the article as far as what it contains is of interest to

¹¹Ibid., p. 256.

¹²Ibid., p. 257.

us here. We have noted how Bultmann uses Dilthey's idea of "understanding" history so that this "understanding" of history becomes relevant to man today, speaking to him because a man's "possibilities" open up before him in such confrontation. We might say that Bultmann relies on Dilthey's approach to the extent that it makes a bridge to a "meaning-complex" in the past which can thus come to have present meaning for the historian in his own existence. However, it is important to realize that Bultmann is not relying on Dilthey's approach to determine the selfhood, inner-nature or "motivation-complex" of a character in history. Bultmann is concerned here with meaning, not motive!

It is now useful to turn to Bultmann's The Presence of Eternity, mentioned above, to see what further dimensions arise in connection with the methodology and purpose of historical interpretation. In this book we find Bultmann saying more of what he has said before, only in this instance he finds support for his ideas in the work of R. G. Collingwood, The Idea of History.¹³ Although it is dangerous to sum up such a large book, or even such an author as Collingwood in brief form, I would do so by mentioning two of his answers to basic questions which he sets out for the reader in his in-

¹³R. G. Collingwood, The Idea of History, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946. What was also of help to me in understanding Collingwood was a reading of his autobiography.

troductio. To the question, what is the "object of history": he replies: "history is the science of res gestae, the attempt to answer question about human actions done in the past";¹⁴ and to the question: "what is history for?", he replies:

My answer is that history is 'for' human self-knowledge. . . . Knowing yourself means knowing, first, what it is to be a man; secondly, knowing what it is to be the kind of man you are; and thirdly, knowing what it is to be the man you are and nobody else is. Knowing yourself means knowing what you can do; and since nobody knows what he can do until he tries, the only clue to what man can do is what man has done. The value of history, then, is that it teaches us what man has done and thus what man is.¹⁵

Bultmann takes Collingwood's definition, that history is for self-knowledge, and brings it into focus with his idea about the existential decision which is called for when one is confronted by the biblical witness. In doing this Bultmann is able to say that "Jesus Christ is the eschatological event not as an established fact of past time, but as repeatedly present as addressing you and me here and now in preaching. Preaching is address, and as address it demands answer, decision."¹⁶ In this and in the book as a whole, we can see how Bultmann's philosophy of history, borrowed from Dilthey, is

¹⁴Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁶R. Bultmann, The Presence of Eternity, op. cit., pp. 151-152.

related to his view of what the biblical writings offer us in terms of our own existence.

It is at this point that the difference between Bultmann's use of the so-called existential view of history will differ to some degree with the use made of it in the new quest. Bultmann's critical work with the New Testament Gospel accounts emphasized, (and no doubt correctly), their kerygmatic nature and the absence of historical facts about the human life of Jesus. What this of course led him to was a kind of special interpretation of the kerygma - this semi-historical material written by people who had had an experience of significance with regard to their lives and fundamental being.

What was important for Bultmann was that he make contact with the meaning the early church found in Jesus and which was expressed by them in their preaching about the exalted Lord. It is through this encounter that Bultmann is able, to a large extent, to be a Christian, and not through any direct contact historically with Jesus. With Bultmann the only thing possible is to encounter the selfhood of the early community in their preaching, but only insofar as it was an expression of what the total person of Jesus meant to them. It is the function of his philosophy of history, stemming out of his use of the ideas presented in the work of Dilthey and Collingwood on the meaning and possibilities of history for our existence, to make this encounter possible in the ways discussed above.

However, where the new element comes in, with regard to the new quest, is that it proposes to come to some sort of an encounter with the selfhood of Jesus himself.¹⁷ Supposedly this is also to be done by means of, and with the use of a Dilthey-like approach. This proves to be a distinctly different use of Dilthey from the one which Bultmann employs to encounter the selfhood of the early Christian community insofar as it speaks to his own existence. A glance at J. M. Robinson's book, A New Quest of the Historical Jesus makes evident this switch in the usage of what he calls: "A new concept of history and the self."¹⁷ Robinson sees history as the "act of intention, the commitment, the meaning for the participants, behind the external occurrence."¹⁸ The important thing about the new view of history is that through its use we can see how "In such intention and commitment the self of the participant actualizes itself, and in this act of self-actualization the self is revealed. Hence," concludes Robinson, "it is the task of modern historiography to grasp such acts of intention, such commitments, such meaning, such self-actualization; and it is the task of modern biography to lay hold of the selfhood which is therein revealed."¹⁹

¹⁷J. M. Robinson, A New Quest of the Historical Jesus, op. cit., pp. 66ff

¹⁸Ibid., p. 67.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 67-68.

What Robinson is expounding upon here is greatly influenced by the philosophy of history and the reasons for doing history which we have seen in germ with Dilthey and then applied to the biblical writings by Bultmann. What is different, as we have said, is that now the intent is to apply this approach to the study of Jesus himself. The Gospels speak to Bultmann because he is confronted with the believing community's phrasing of Jesus' call for decision. The new quest, on the other hand, proposes to open the possibility of a confrontation with Jesus himself. The effort to do this, the initial impetus, some follow-ups, and the results, are discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

Section I

Looking at the new quest, probably the first thing which must be examined is the lecture given by Ernst Käsemann in 1953 to a group of savants at Marburg which really gave birth to what Robinson has named "The New Quest of the Historical Jesus."¹ (Käsemann, incidentally, did not use these words to describe the new effort which he was advocating.)

What he had to say resulted, in part, from the scepticism which Bultmann had voiced with regard to the possibility of finding historical facts pertaining to Jesus himself. As Käsemann says in the lecture at one point: "Scholarship moves forward in antitheses, and the radicality of Bultmann elicits a reaction."² Yet, it is important to understand that it was not only scepticism which Bultmann had voiced. What he did was to maintain that it was not necessary for faith that the

¹Ernst Käsemann, "Das Problem des historischen Jesus," Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen. Erster Band; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960, (tr. Dagmar Siglinde Freiin von Stetten McCurdy), pp. 187-214. The distinction between Historie and Geschichte, if not obvious, is left in German.

²Ibid., p. 189.

historical facts of Jesus' life and person be reconstructed. Thus, it was not really so much his scepticism which Käsemann and the others were reacting to, but rather Bultmann's rejection of any importance in finding and establishing such facts.

why it is that Käsemann sees a need for the uncovering of the evidence pertaining to Jesus and his way of being as man, is prompted by the need to show clearly the continuity between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. This is a fundamental idea. He seems to believe, as Robinson does, that Bultmann's emphasis has laid too much stress on the discontinuity between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. Käsemann points out his intentions in the following:

. . . first one tries to prove that the synoptic writings contain much more authentic material than the opposition wants to believe and accept; and secondly one defends especially the reliability if not of the whole, but yet of the oldest passion and Easter tradition in the Gospels. In both cases we are trying to work against a disruption or antithesis of kerygma and tradition. We want to hold on to the fact that the kerygma includes the passing on of facts as they have been passed on by tradition.³

However, Käsemann realizes the great difficulty in finding what he calls "authentic Jesus material." This is due to the fact that the early church exercised such a strong influence over the accurate recording of what Jesus had said and what he was like, in their own

³Ibid.

effort to preach their belief in Him and in His message. As Käsemann puts the problem near the end of his lecture: "The difficulty with our problem is the fact that the exalted Lord has 'sucked up' the picture of the earthly One."⁴ It is in light of this situation, which awaits the would-be interpreter of the Gospels, that he must endeavor to find the characteristic features of what Jesus had to say and who he was, as this is absorbed, literally, "sucked up into" the picture of the exalted Lord as the early community witnessed to him.

It is Käsemann's idea that "The solution of this problem we cannot try to obtain successfully from so-called historical brute facts, but only from the joining of and tension between the preaching of Jesus and that of his community."⁵ Then Käsemann adds pointedly: "The question concerning the Historical Jesus is legitimately the question concerning the continuity of the Gospels in the discontinuity of the time and in the variation of the kerygma."⁶ Here we get to the root of why Käsemann sees the need to establish the authentic Jesus material which is contained in the kerygma. Although he feels that the preaching of the Church may be anonymous in that it preaches a message sometimes more than a person, he makes it clear: ". . . that the Gospel

⁴Ibid., p. 213.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

itself is not anonymous, otherwise it would lead to moralism and mysticism."⁷ He goes on to maintain that "The Gospel is bound to the one who reveals himself before and after Easter to his followers as the Lord in confronting them with the near God and thereby with the freedom of responsibility of belief. First he did it without any credentials and even without the claim of being Messiah, and yet he did it with the authority of the one who is called the only begotten son in the fourth Gospel."⁸

In the course of the lecture we find Käsemann putting together his picture of the historical Jesus from various genuine elements which he finds in the Gospels. Käsemann feels that those elements are genuine which would not have been influenced by the early Christian's belief or by the influence of the general Jewish background. As he says at one point:

The only time when we are on safe ground is in the case when tradition, for some reason or another, cannot be derived from the Jews or the Early Christians, especially when the Jewish Christians altered or changed their tradition because it was too daring. To conclude, we want to investigate such tradition. Of course we have to realize from the beginning that this will not give us any clarity with regard to what connected Jesus with his Palestinian surroundings and his later community. There we have the possibility of a great variety of hypotheses. In any case, it seems that it will be almost more important for us if or when we face what the

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

things were which separated Jesus from his friends and enemies.⁹

However, we will not immediately examine the exegetical rightness of the supposedly authentic Jesus material which Käsemann picks out and defends. Before seeing how this "authentic" material allegedly shows "Jesus' understanding of his existence . . . deduced from his intentions revealed in his sayings. . . ,"¹⁰ something more must be said about Käsemann.

In the first place we must try and see what his view of history is, and in particular, how his historical methodology and outlook aid him in finding the selfhood of Jesus, in terms of the way Robinson suggested this might be done. There are several things to note in this lecture in connection with his view of history and his view of its purposes in connection with the life of Jesus research. After seeing this we can turn to the results of his search for who the man Jesus was.

In the following, Käsemann describes the historical situation of the early Christian community faced with the task of recalling the Christ event in its entirety and preaching it, along with our present problems connected with interpreting all of this:

The Problem of history in the Gospels:
The history (Geschichte) which we find in the

⁹Ibid., pp. 205-206.

¹⁰J. M. Robinson, A New Quest of the Historical Jesus, op. cit., p. 70.

New Testament is, for us who live two thousand years later, history (Historie). That means we have no direct access to this Historie even if we were to look at it in the most detailed way with all possible care. We speak in a different language, think in different terms, and have before us different situations and decisions to make than those people who were the contemporaries of the forming New Testament. We learn that dying has a voice in the history (Geschichte) and that fact appears as a discontinuity in the continuation of the generations. . . . All Historie we only know through tradition and understand through interpretation. Because to know the facts that happened in it are of little value to us. Rationalism as well as supernaturalism have always tried to back up the believability of the facts in the New Testament. . . . For faith, nothing has been won in either case. . . . We should also know that the Gospel story does not come closer to us when we dilute it into bruta facta.

Not to recognize this is the self-deception of all those who want to exclude the salvation history objectively proved out of world history and in doing so have to rely on a multitude of strange events. In making Jesus a miracle man nobody is in the real sense forced to decide between faith and no faith. In proving the empty tomb in a reliable way, this says that the importance of the message of the resurrection for me personally is not plainly evident.

The early Christians must have known that. Only this explains why the Gospels were not primarily written as a "report" but that rather we find their own Kerygma covering up and lying over the picture of the historical Jesus, thus putting us as historians into a difficult situation, making it impossible for us to reconstruct.¹¹

Yet, Käsemann's attitude is not one of complete pessimism concerning the possibilities of ascertaining some important things about the man Jesus, even in the light of the picture which he paints of the Gospels'

¹¹ Ernst Käsemann, "Das Problem des historischen Jesus," op. cit., pp. 190-191.

nature and historical make-up. The following two remarks point to what he thinks can be understood out of the Gospel accounts. Speaking about the discontinuity which some scholars have seen between the events of the Gospel and the preaching of these events, he goes on to say: "Historie is not only understood through tradition as such, but through interpretation, not through the simple listing of facts in the past."; and also: "Historie possesses historical meaning only insofar as it speaks in a question and answer way in our present time; that means it finds interpreters who hear its questions and answers in our present time and understands them."¹²

It is in this sense, which is very close to Bultmann's outlook, that we can take the kerygmatic Gospels, interpret them in a question and answer fashion for ourselves finding out something about the man who stands behind the kerygma. Käsemann makes it clear that the preaching of the early Christians was firmly based in the man Jesus when he comments: "Because the fact that the first Christians identified the humiliated Christ with the exalted Lord testifies to the fact that they are not able to abstract the representation of his Geschichte from their faith. At the same time it manifests that the community is not willing to replace Geschichte with myth, or a heavenly being with the Nazarene. Already this first community fought factually against a fanatical docetism

¹²Ibid., p. 192

as well as against a historical teaching of gnosis. Obviously, it is the opinion of the community that one cannot understand the earthly Jesus any other way than in view of Easter and therefore in his exaltation as Lord of the community; but on the other hand one cannot understand Easter in an adequate way if one doesn't consider the earthly Jesus."¹³

Here again we come face to face with Käsemann's idea that the important thing to beware of is a docetic kerygma, to realize that the historical man Jesus necessarily played an important part in the preaching of the early community, and finally that this historical Jesus can, in ways, be discovered. Since the early community so firmly believed that the Christ they believed in was the man which they had known, Käsemann thus maintains that it is both important and logical that we too must be concerned with this man Jesus who is "continuous" with the Christ of faith.

To make sure of this continuity, it is clear that Käsemann has to firmly establish the identity of the historical man Jesus with the exalted Christ at some level deeper than a merely physical one. He must, in fact, make an effort to identify what the selfhood, the motives, and the intentions of the Jesus of history were and then see if these fit and coincide with what we believe to be the selfhood of the Christ of faith who died for men and

¹³Ibid., p. 196.

was exalted to the right hand of the father.

J. M. Robinson holds an optimistic view concerning what Käsemann has tried to do. He comments: ". . . Käsemann's brief analysis of the authentic sayings of Jesus concludes that, in spite of the absence of messianic titles, Jesus' understanding of his existence can be deduced from his intentions revealed in his sayings."¹⁴

What is especially important to note about this remark of Robinson's is that precisely at this point we are confronted with the actual new quest use of the philosophy of "understanding" in history, posed by Wilhelm Dilthey with all its limitations, in researching the inner life of Jesus. Robinson makes it quite clear what the new quest seeks, when he says: ". . . Jesus' understanding of himself can be deduced. . . ."¹⁵ Coupled with this, he has made abundantly clear his opinion that the way to achieve this was opened by Dilthey's work: "It was primarily Wilhelm Dilthey who introduced the modern period by posing for historiography the 'question about the scientific knowledge of individual persons, the great forms of singular human existence.'"¹⁶ As pointed out above, Käsemann is attempting to establish the continuity between Jesus man and Jesus Lord. To do this he uses a Diltheyian approach which hopefully en-

¹⁴J. M. Robinson, A New Quest of the Historical Jesus, op. cit., p. 70.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 67.

¹⁶Ibid.

ables him to grasp Jesus' inner intentions and selfhood as a man. In being able to do this, in finding this real inner historical Jesus, Käsemann and the other new questers feel they will have "the key to open the door" revealing the continuity between Jesus man and Jesus Christ. What Käsemann comes up with is discussed in the following.

Käsemann first addresses himself to what he calls the special character of Jesus' mission, as seen especially in the first, second, and fourth antithesis of the sermon on the mount. These, he argues, are indisputably authentic Jesus material. He builds up his case for this maintaining that it would be acceptable for one rabbi to overrule another, but for Jesus to overrule Moses with the ego de lego is absolutely extraordinary. He argues that to this ". . .we have no parallel and we can't have one. This is because the Jew who does what is illustrated here has left the Jewish circle - he brings the messianic torah and is the Messiah."¹⁷

It is interesting to note here how Käsemann derives the idea, from this use of the "Ich aber sage" spoken by Jesus, that His claim was messianic, although he didn't say so in so many words:

The un-heard-of-ness of the word witnesses to its realness. It also proves, secondly, that Jesus appeared like a rabbi or a prophet, but that his claim was beyond a rabbi or a prophet, and thirdly, that one cannot put him into the category of the late Jewish pietism.

¹⁷ Ernst Käsemann, "Das Problem des historischen Jesus," op. cit., p. 206.

He was a Jew and pre-supposes late Jewish piety, but he also breaks this sphere with his claim. The only category which does justice to his claim is, completely independent of the fact of whether he used it or demanded its use, and the one which his disciples gave him, that is - that of Messiah."¹⁸

Thus, it is the stark uniqueness of Jesus that is the mark of continuity with the Christ of faith. In Käsemann's view Christ was not only unique before his death and resurrection, but also showed definite evidences of this uniqueness in his human personality during his ministry.

In the next section Käsemann discusses Mark 2:23 noting that this is the only account of Jesus' remark about the sabbath being for man, and not man for the sabbath. Käsemann argues that this saying exhibits the extreme freedom which Jesus possessed. He points to this fact noting how the incident has been softened by the insertion of the second sentence: ". . .the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath." Käsemann feels that "It is obvious that those two sentences clash and also that only the first sentence fits into the talk which, up to this point, was not christologically oriented."¹⁹ What this illustrates to Käsemann is that the freedom which the man Jesus exhibited was so great that those people who later wrote the accounts had to limit this expression of freedom to Jesus alone, it being too great for man. Here

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 207

again what Käsemann is doing is to uncover something about the inner-self of Jesus from this one incident recorded in Mark.

What Jesus has to say with regard to the cleanliness laws, Mark: 7:14ff, is also of great significance in telling us something about the man Jesus. In this case Käsemann argues that Jesus thinks: "It is the human heart which brings the uncleanness into the world. . ." ²⁰ and not dirt from the "outside world." From this Käsemann maintains that Jesus fought against the traditional dualism of a pure transcendent realm and the impure earthly realm. It was this, argues Käsemann, which in particular enabled Him to associate with the unclean people: the sinners, adulterous women, and tax collectors.

Note also the following words of Käsemann as he describes the feelings and motives which drove Jesus to act as he did: Jesus is "the one who knows about the meanness of the human heart and its demonic power and who wants to take the human heart over for God." ²¹ Further; Jesus "did not feel that his mission was to fight the devil, but to serve man." ²² These, then, are more examples of how Käsemann uncovers inner intentions and motives from the authentic Jesus material which he picks out.

Another passage Käsemann takes up, as contributing

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., 208.

²²Ibid.

to the picture of Jesus, is from Matthew 10:26ff where the invitation is given: to scream from the rooftops what has been given secretly. It is the hope of God's reign which is to enable man to live without fear. However, Käsemann argues that this throwing away of "all precautions"²³ was too difficult a thing for the early community to do. Because of this, what we have left is the witness of Jesus for whom this was not impossible at all. Jesus is pictured here as the wisdom teacher and, as Käsemann describes him: "...the picture of the wisdom teacher does not go well together with the one of the rabbi, because the former lives out of a directness of view, as we have seen it in the parables of Jesus, whereas the latter is led by reflection and is bound to the scripture."²⁴ Thus, concludes Käsemann, as the exalted Christ lived with a "directness of view" so did the earthly Jesus.

Another selection made by Käsemann of authentic Jesus material is Matthew 12:28ff. In essence he feels that this is genuine or, as he puts it: "It is unimportant to decide whether this formulation stems from Jesus himself, but it is undoubtedly true that he felt that he was inspired."²⁵ What Käsemann wants to emphasize here about Jesus is the certainty with which he spoke. He

²³Ibid., p. 209.

²⁴Ibid., italics mine.

²⁵Ibid., p. 209, italics mine.

does not use the amen in the traditional response position, but transfers it to such a position that it gives authority to his words at the beginning. This indicates to Käsemann His obvious inspiration and personal awareness of His calling. Speaking to the use of the word amen and in summing up this particular section, Käsemann comments: "It doesn't make any difference, however, whether He used the word or not, He must have understood himself as a tool of the living divine spirit which was expected by the Jews in the last days."²⁶

The last selection of authentic Jesus material which Käsemann makes is found in Matthew 11:12ff. Here Jesus is saying that the kingdom of God had suffered violence since the days of John the Baptist and that it is being held back by the evil powers. Käsemann points out that this was very difficult material for the gospel writers to comprehend since it is clear, according to Käsemann, that Jesus felt the new epoch had begun and had been introduced by the Baptist. The Gospel writers could not have admitted this much and thus Käsemann maintains that only Jesus could so speak of John:

Who else than Jesus himself can look back in such a fashion on the terminated salvation period of the Old Testament, who does not degrade John the Baptist as a forerunner, as has been done by the whole of the Christian community and the New Testament, but who pulls him on His side and who lets him introduce the new aeon which seems incredible for the later Christian ears? Who is then the one who does justice to John the

²⁶Ibid., p. 210, italics mine.

Baptist and yet demands a mission which was not connected with John the Baptist? Obviously the one who with his gospel brings the reign of God. . . .²⁷

Thus Käsemann maintains that Jesus saw himself as the one whose words were bringing in the Kingdom of God.

In this connection, note the following sentence carefully

as Käsemann lets us know just what Jesus was thinking:

"Jesus hat gemeint, dass mit seinem Worte die Basileia zu seinen Hörern komme!"²⁸

This immediately raises the question of Jesus' messianic consciousness. Käsemann makes it clear that he does not believe that Jesus had any such consciousness: "I am convinced that there is no possibility to prove the affirmation of this question. In all places in which we find a title of messiah, I take it as the kerygma of the community."²⁹ He feels that the same is true of the "Son of Man" usages. In light of the character which he sees Jesus as having, (one which does not make messianic claims, which exhibits authority great freedom and uniqueness combined with a stirring directness of approach and an inner sureness of his calling and direct inspiration), Käsemann offers the following explanation of the man Jesus and how it was that he was fitted into the late-Jewish messianic expectations:

²⁷Ibid., pp. 210-211.

²⁸Ibid., p. 211.

²⁹Ibid.

But if this is true and Jesus never himself claimed to have been the Messiah, then this would be very characteristic. He differed thereby from the late Jewish expectation as well as from the proclamation of his own community. He would not have painted a picture of the future, but would have done the necessary in the present, and would not have put his person, but his mission first in his preaching. And his community would have testified to its understanding of the special character of his mission in responding to his proclamation with a credo to the messiah and the Son of God.³⁰

³⁰Ibid., italics mine.

Section II

With these six examples of supposedly authentic Jesus material, which Käsemann uses to reconstruct his picture of the man Jesus, we must return to our criticisms of Dilthey's method of history, or lack of it. Recall the three modes of expression which Dilthey delineated and how with regard to each we concluded that the possibilities for getting to the selfhood of a person in history, even under the most ideal conditions as far as materials about the person were concerned, were very poor especially in the realm of the "motivation complex." The significance of these findings takes an added significance when it is realized that as far as Jesus' life history goes, we have only the most general details about what he underwent in his lifetime. Those facts which we do have are, far more often than not, veiled in the preaching of the believing community and even those facts which such a scholar as Käsemann struggles to establish as authentic Jesus material, still remain open to question and are by no means affixed with a permanent "authentic" stamp.

Moreover, in the case of Jesus we are left with no piece of art work to analyse - something at all "concrete" in which he might have expressed his "inner self-

hood," nor is it at all likely that we even possess any of His exclamations or gestures which might not in some way be colored by the reports of the events of His lifetime. By far the preponderance of expression-forms which we do possess are things written about Jesus, no doubt with some authentic bits interwoven, but in the main reports made on him or about his activities.

It is with this in mind that we also recall the remark made by Dilthey himself with regard to the facts which one must possess about a person even before attempting to "understand" the inner selfhood of any historical person. Dilthey calls for a far greater background of knowledge to be built up around the character under investigation than is ever possible as far as the life of Jesus is concerned. A real chronology of the life of Jesus is not possible to any significant degree. All the influences which must have played on Jesus as he grew and matured can only be generally established in terms of what we know about the total environment in which he lived. As far as any first hand information might go, we have absolutely no information about what went into the development of the baby Jesus, into the young boy Jesus, not to mention the adolescent Jesus and the "teen-age" Jesus on through to the Jesus in his late twenties. As foolish as it may seem even to care for such detailed information about Jesus in these stages of his life, it would seem to be quite important if any significant attempt is to be made to grasp the real self-

hood of the man Jesus.

This is made abundantly clear in recalling Dilthey's ideas referring to the necessity of having a broad factual background of a character before "understanding" can take place. What must be done once these facts have been uncovered is: ". . . to produce a coherent and intelligible account of the processes described in them."³¹ To produce a "coherent and intelligible account of the processes described in. . ." the "facts" about Jesus is impossible, given the nature of the Gospels! We have already seen how the failure of the old quest made this point quite clear. But most surely, even to do the type of Jesus research proposed in the new quest, such "intelligible and coherent" data must be available!

Another question raised in connection with Dilthey's work, was whether from the acts of a man one could later determine what the motives and intentions were behind and prompting these acts. An example in applying this to what we do know about Jesus, the one most sure "act" concerning Him is the fact that he was crucified. From all that we can gather it is fairly safe to say that Jesus did not attempt to escape from this fate and therefore in some way he apparently was willing to enter into this event. His act, as far as the crucifixion was concerned, was one of submission.

³¹H. A. Hodges, The Philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey, op. cit., p. 155, italics mine.

But to attempt to deduce the purpose of Jesus' act of submission is, apart from the reasons supplied by the early community and two thousand years of theology, quite beyond the historian's reach. Answers may be given, but it would appear that in offering such answers, even in the way Käsemann would (although not on this particular subject), we are finding a return to something which resembles the subjectivism characteristic of the nineteenth century liberal approach to life of Jesus research. One can only conclude that the attempt to derive motives, intentions and ultimately the selfhood of Jesus from his acts or his responses to various situations, is found to be futile except in the most general terms.

A closer look at some of Käsemann's conclusions might make these points a little clearer. His appeal to evidence for the uniqueness of Jesus and the unusual freedom which he manifests leads him to make several judgments with regard to what Jesus was feeling, with what he "knew" about himself, and what the inner motives were which made him act in a certain way. Whether he intends to do so or not, Käsemann, in attempting to prove the continuity of the man Jesus with the Christ of faith, makes these shaky pronouncements on His inner selfhood: his freedom and his genuine "inner knowledge" (as Käsemann calls it) of his inspiration are clearly due to his direct relationship with God never before possible for men. Käsemann makes the frank statement about what was

in Jesus mind with regard to his amen usage in Matthew 12:28ff that: ". . .He must have understood himself as a tool of the living divine spirit which was expected by the Jews in the last days:" ". . .er muss sich als Werkzeug des lebendigen Gottesgeistes verstanden haben. . ."³²

Especially when we come to Käsemann's discussion of the messianic consciousness of Jesus, we find him drawing many conclusions about what was going on in Jesus' mind, and what it was that made him act the way he did. All this he infers from bits and scraps of "hopefully" authentic material. Note the use of the conditional in the following which speaks also to the subjectivity of such a conclusion: "Er hätte nicht ein Zukunftsbild entworfen, sondern das in der Gegenwart Nötige getan und nicht seine Person, sondern seinen Auftrag in den Mittelpunkt seiner Predigt gestellt."³³

If it only appears that Käsemann's work shows some remarkable affinities with the nineteenth century liberal approach to the historical Jesus, a remark taken from one of his more recent articles points directly to this similarity: ". . .auch der Liberalismus sah Entscheidendes richtig, wenn er Jesu Unmittelbarkeit gegenüber Gott als Vater betonte."³⁴ The question which thus

³²Ernst Käsemann, "Das Problem des historischen Jesus," op. cit., p. 209.

³³Ibid., p. 211, italics mine.

³⁴Ernst Käsemann, "Zum Thema der urchristlichen Apokalyptik," ZTK: 59. Jahrgang 1962 Heft 3, Feb. 1963,

begins to form for us now is one concerning the difference which there is in reality between the old and the new quest. We will see below how S. Ogden and V. A. Harvey pose this embarrassing question in relation to the statements of J. M. Robinson, but at this time viewing only the work of Käsemann we can see definite evidence that his anthropological emphasis on the inner selfhood of Jesus shows marked resemblances with the aims and results of some of the old liberal questers' results and aims.

Leaving Käsemann now to take a look at only some examples of those people who have taken up his challenge, we must have it in mind that there is a real possibility that the new quest is destined to fail and that the fundamental reason for this failure is based on the glaring limitations of its historical methodology derived from a "Diltheyian system of understanding."

G. Bornkamm picks up the Käsemann challenge and attempts to write what we must call a "Jesus book" for lack of a better name.³⁵ He is also concerned about the issue raised by Käsemann (what has been called the pos-

Tübingen: Paul Siebeck. This point was raised in the Käsemann New Testament Seminar at Harvard, in the Fall of 1963, discussing this article.

³⁵Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, tr. Irene and Fraser McLuskey with J. M. Robinson, New York: Harper & Row, 1960. "This is a translation of the third edition (1959) of Jesus van Nazareth, first published in 1956 by W. Kohlhammer Verlag, Stuttgart."

sibility of "kerygmatic docetism") and is also bent on relating the Jesus of history to the Christ of faith; that is, he is concerned with continuity between the two "manifestations." Hugh Anderson, in his article entitled "Existential Hermeneutics" which is in essence a laudatory review of Bornkamm's book, makes the following comment showing us how Bornkamm fits squarely in with J. M. Robinson's ideas about the new quest, its possibilities, and its legitimacy:

The typical post-Bultmannian emphasis on the self-containedness of every single unit of the tradition, every Gospel pericope as, by itself and independently of its context, testimony to the totality of the person and history of Jesus, no doubt offers a rather staggering challenge to our customary ways of thinking. . . . The unbiased reader of Bornkamm's book can hardly fail to admit that, with the dramatic shift of the locus of interpretation from what we can say about the life of Jesus in the biographical sense to what Jesus in the reality of his direct presence in every solitary part of the tradition has to say to us, we have a positive compensation, however, disarming it be, for anything we feel has been lost.³⁶

Bornkamm is looking for the history of Jesus in the kerygma of the early church and he is optimistic about what can be found. As he says after mentioning that the New Testament sources do not provide biography material per se: "Nevertheless, what these sources do yield as regards the historical facts concerning the personality career of Jesus is not negligible, and demands

³⁶ Hugh Anderson, "Existential Hermeneutics," op. cit., pp. 141-142.

careful attention."³⁷ Note here that Bornkamm hopes to collect certain "facts concerning the personality" of Jesus. It is with this Jesus of history which Bornkamm wants us to have an encounter. Making this encounter possible through historical methods will, he believes, give man a chance to respond existentially to the Jesus he now can meet. There are several things which Bornkamm picks out about Jesus which will, supposedly, make this encounter possible for us, most of which are reminiscent of what Käsemann was saying. These things are: his authority, the immediacy and directness of his approach, his astounding sovereignty, his great perception and penetrating insight, his genuine involvement in the things in which he participates, and his consistency in aims and purpose.³⁸ In all these things Bornkamm feels that Jesus is making the "reality of God present."³⁹ It is in connection with this that Bornkamm can later say that the character of Jesus is ". . .to be found in his words and in his actions. . . ."⁴⁰

However in the end, Bornkamm's book leaves us with several questions centering around what newness, what depth of insight he has reached into the selfhood of Jesus, and to what degree Bornkamm remains objective

³⁷G. Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth. op. cit., p. 53.

³⁸Ibid., chapter III - "Jesus of Nazareth," pp. 53-63.

³⁹Ibid., p. 62.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 169.

in his analysis of the Jesus material. Carl Braaten⁴¹ seems to think that the book is a mixture of two things, and I agree with him at this point: at times Bornkamm is seen writing as a historical-critic analyzing the material in an objective way, while at other times he is quite clearly bringing his faith to bear on the issues. Braaten feels that Bornkamm is both aware of the fact that ultimately only faith can secure the continuity between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith, but that he is at the same time anxious to establish historically, material which will witness to this continuity.

From this it begins to appear that it is not possible to get to the Jesus of history by historical methods as illustrated above, and also that the attempt to do so, even in the manner proposed by such a new quester as Bornkamm, is quite illegitimate inspite of any arguments to the contrary.

A further example of this we can see in the way Ebeling struggles to determine what it was that "came to expression" in Jesus of Nazareth and how ^{he} decides that this is faith.⁴² Ebeling sees Jesus of History as the "witness to faith." The meaning of Easter becomes: ". . .that Jesus as the witness to faith became the

⁴¹Carl Braaten, in Kerygma and History, op. cit., p. 22.

⁴²Gerhard Ebeling, "The Question of the Historical Jesus and the Problem of Christology," in Word and Faith, tr. J. W. Leitch, Alva: SCM, 1963.

ground of faith. . . ."43 Ebeling thus assures the continuity through his view of faith.

Yet something here also comes under the criticism which Braaten levels at all such reasoning which attempts to establish continuity by historical measure:

Can the historian qua historian establish the continuity of the kerygma with antecedent history on purely historical grounds? Can the threat of a docetic, mythological kerygma be overcome in the fires of historical criticism? Kähler thought it nothing less than naive or preposterous for the historian to establish the ground and the content of faith. Is this not precisely what the modern historians are attempting, however, when they set out to establish a continuity or identity between the earthly Jesus and the post-Easter Christ of the kerygma.44

This certainly is a valid criticism and in light of it, it is well to hear the comment made by T. A. Roberts on the relevance and goals of historical criticism with regard to gospel research:

The truth of the historical assertion does not itself necessarily imply the truth of the religious claim. The truth of the historical claim is clearly related to the truth of the religious claim, but the historical claim cannot itself justify the religious claim. Yet by maintaining that it is possible to vindicate the specifically historical claims of gospel history, Christian apologetic all too frequently seems to suggest that historical truths by themselves vindicate the great religious truths of the gospel, thereby substituting an unjustified and misplaced appeal to history for the previously commoner appeals either to infallible Scripture or to the

43Ibid., p. 301.

44Carl Braaten, Kerygma & History, op. cit., p. 21.

infallible.⁴⁵

What is significant in this remark is its suggestion about what has happened when historians attempted to "vindicate the specifically historical claims of gospel history." It is true that the new quest is no longer an outright attempt to prove the religious claim by means of history, yet in a subtle way it is akin to this movement. What the new quest is trying to do, is to vindicate the historical continuity between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith, by the use of very dubious historical means and with a glaring lack of objectivity and methodology in this attempt. What the new questers do, in effect, is to take the authentic Jesus material they find in the Gospels and then use this material about the Jesus of history to prove his connection and identity with the Christ of faith. But then, if the selfhood of the Christ of faith in which we believe can be proved historically to be continuous or identical with the selfhood of Jesus the man, then the stumbling block for faith is considerably lowered, if not removed altogether. In spite of any other intentions or grounds for legitimacy, the new quest proof of continuity ends up being a real crutch for faith!

The reason this is so difficult to see at first, when reading some of the new quest material, is that a

⁴⁵T. A. Roberts, History and Christian Apologetic. London: S.P.C.K., 1960, p. 145.

false claim is made, a claim which the new quest does not at all live up to. Anderson is heard making one of these claims in the following:

It is the great merit of the exponents of the new quest that they have wrestled in depth with the problem of faith and history, [when in fact they have not!] or more narrowly of the relationship between existential openness and objective historical research. Facing this problem J. M. Robinson maintains that post-Bultmannian methodology consists in the simultaneous interaction of objective analysis and existential openness.⁴⁶

Perhaps the new quest people have done some "deep wrestling," but it is not true by any means to say that they have either controlled or understood what existential openness is or have faced the difficulties and limitations of this form of analysis in relation to the gospel materials: they have wrestled not nearly "deeply" enough!

It would not be proper to say that K. Stendahl reacts to this particular short-coming in his Interpreter's Dictionary Bible article,⁴⁷ however what he appeals for in the way of a "descriptive theology" (that is trying to understand the subject "on its own terms" alone and definitely leaving out such existential encounter as we have seen it above) could well be taken

⁴⁶Hugh Anderson, "Existential Hermeneutics," op. cit., p. 154.

⁴⁷K. Stendahl, "Contemporary Biblical Theology," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 1. NY & Nashville: Abington Press, 1962, pp. 418-432.

as a reactionary approach to the new questers work. T. A. Roberts largely subscribes to the orderly method of doing historical investigation as put forth by M. Bloch in his book The Historian's Craft, but Stendahl goes farther and insists that a piece of material must be analysed strictly on "its own terms." His position is that: ". . .our only concern is to indicate in what way a descriptive biblical theology gives the systematic theologian a live option to attempt a direct translation of the biblical material. . . ." ⁴⁸ This plainly is a far cry from the agenda of the new quest technicians and is in stark contrast to Bultmann's approach discussed above.

S. Ogden and V. A. Harvey point out very clearly, in connection with J. M. Robinson's book, how it is that the new quest, while hoping to merely vindicate the historical continuity between Jesus the man and Christ exalted, in actual fact returns to a type of "proving the gospel truth" through historical means. Their argument on this point follows two lines. First the line of argument is developed showing in rather vivid terms how the old quest is closely related to the new. After reasoning that the intent behind the new quest is basically the same as it was in the old quest, (that is to establish who Jesus was) then the co-authors proceed to attribute this to the fact that the object for which

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 430.

both quests search is the same: Jesus' selfhood or inner self. They ask pointedly: "Is the new quest for the existentiell selfhood of Jesus different from the old quest for the 'inner life' of Jesus, his 'personality'? [We have already noted how Bornkamm at one point makes such a strikingly "old quest" statement as: "Nevertheless, what these sources do yield as regards the historical facts concerning the personality and career of Jesus is not negligible, and demands careful attention;"⁴⁹ not to mention Käsemann's statements about Jesus' inner selfhood or basically his personality.] And," continue Ogden and Harvey, "if it is impossible to recover Jesus' inner life' - as Robinson claims - is it any easier to recover Jesus' existentiell selfhood?"⁵⁰ They press their argument even further by suggesting that "Apart from the new vocabulary ('I-Thou encounter,' 'authentic existence,' 'transcendent selfhood'), . . ." ⁵¹ the new quest differs surprisingly little from the old. This all proves to be a rather damning line of argument to the new quest's efforts.

Having once made this point, they move ahead to pose briefly the even more penetrating question with which this paper has been dealing here: Is there really

⁴⁹G. Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth. op. cit., p. 53.

⁵⁰S. Ogden, V. A. Harvey, "How New Is the 'New Quest of the Historical Jesus'?", op. cit., p. 234.

⁵¹Ibid.

any possibility of finding the existential selfhood of Jesus by modern historical methods or by any method?

As they ask it: Are we

. . .seriously to believe in the light of all we know about the complexity of human motivation and its relation to speech that such an argument permits, and even justifies, a conclusive historical judgment concerning Jesus' inmost motivation and self-understanding? If modern historians are unable to decipher the mystery of Abraham Lincoln, even though they possess thousands of authentic sayings, intimate letters, and eyewitness reports, are we to believe that we can "encounter" the real Jesus of Nazareth on the basis of a handful of sayings preserved in no chronological order by a community that admittedly recast the greater number of them to correspond with Old Testament prophecies and to point to Jesus' supernatural nature?⁵²

Finally at this point, we are brought full circle to the question, as mentioned, which this paper has discussed: is there a possibility of discovering the inner Jesus by historical methods? While the new questers, and particularly Robinson, seem to think that this is possible, we have noted that the "new concept of history," primarily introduced through Wilhelm Dilthey, is a very shaky concept, poorly defined, and so very limited, especially when related to its use in connection with the Gospel material. These shortcomings and limitations, observed in Dilthey's historical approach when applied to Jesus research, support the argument, put forward by Braaten, Harrisville, Ogden, and Harvey, that the new quest in many ways resembles the old and is thereby open

⁵²Ibid., p. 238.

to many of the same criticisms. The old quest failed in part because it assumed the Gospels held far more historical Jesus material than in fact they did. The new quest also assumes there is historical material about the man Jesus in the Gospels. However, it too fails: partially because its way of interpreting the material automatically returns to a rather subjective reconstruction of the inner-Jesus in support of faith; and partially because it hopes for too much from this material in terms of its being able to open up the inner selfhood of Jesus.

Thus, the one thing which is working from the inside towards the failure of the new quest, is precisely its entire historical approach, hopes, and ends. Hopefully this paper has contributed to a clarifying of the issues relating to recent "discontent" with the new quest, especially with regard to the deficiencies of its historical approach.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Part I

- Berlin, Isaiah: Historical Inevitability, London, Oxford University Press, first edition, 1954.
- Bornkamm, Günther, Jesus of Nazareth, tr. Irene and Fraser McLuckey with J. M. Robinson, New York: Harper & Row, 1960. tr. of third edition of Jesus van Nazareth, first published in 1956 by W. Kohlhammer Verlag, Stuttgart.
- Braaten, Carl E., and Roy A. Harrisville: The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ, Nashville, Abington Press, 1964.
- _____, Kerygma and History, Nashville, Abington Press, 1962.
- Bultmann, Rudolf: History of the Synoptic Tradition, tr. John Marsh, New York & Evanston, 1963.
- _____, Jesus and the Word, tr. Louise Pettibone Smith & Ermine Huntress Lantero, New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1934 & 1958.
- _____, Jesus Christ and Mythology, C. Scribner's Sons, New York 1958.
- _____, The Presence of Eternity: History and Eschatology, Gifford Lectures in 1955. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957.
- _____, Kerygma and Myth, ed. Hans W. Bartsch, revised edition of this translation by R. H. Fuller, Harper Torchbooks, New York and Evanston: 1961.
- _____, Theology of the New Testament, 2 vols., tr. K. Grobel, New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1951 - vol. 1., 1955 - vol. 2.
- _____, Essays: Philosophical and Theological, tr. J. C. G. Greig, New York: Macmillan Company, 1955.

- Collingwood, R. G., The Idea of History. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946.
- _____, An Autobiography, Oxford University Press, first edition 1939; this edition 1959.
- Diem, Hermann, Dogmatics, tr. Harold Knight, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959.
- Ebeling, Gerhard: Word and Faith, tr. J. W. Leitch, Alva: SCM Press, 1963.
- _____, The Nature of Faith, tr. R. G. Smith, Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961.
- Fuller, R. G., The New Testament in Current Studies, New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1962.
- Hodges, H. A.: Wilhelm Dilthey - An Introduction, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1944 & 1949.
- _____, The Philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1952.
- Kähler, Martin: Der sogenannte historische Jesus und der geschichtliche, biblische Christus, 2. Auflage, Leipzig: A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1928.
- Käsemann, Ernst, Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen. Erster Band; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960.
- Knox, John, The Church and the Reality of Christ, New York: Harper & Row, 1962.
- Macquarrie, John, Twentieth-Century Religious Thought. New York: Harper & Row, 1963.
- Meyerhoff, Hans, The Philosophy of History in Our Time, selected and edited by H. M.; Garden City, Doubleday (Anchor Original), 1959.
- Rickmann, H. P., Meaning in History; W. Dilthey's Thoughts on History and Society, introduced and edited by H. P. R.; London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1961.
- Roberts, T. A., History and Christian Apologetic, London, S.P.C.K., 1960.
- Robinson, James M.: A New Quest of the Historical Jesus, London, SCM Press Ltd., first published 1959.
- _____, Kerygma und historischer Jesus, Zürich/Stuttgart, Zwingli Verlag, 1960.

_____, The Problem of History in Mark. London, SCM Press Ltd., 1957.

Schweitzer, Albert, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, tr. W. Montgomery, third edition 1954 with new introduction, London, Adam & Charles Black.

Turner, H. E. W., Historicity and the Gospels. London, A. R. Mowbray & Co., Ltd., 1963.

Wrede, W., Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien. Göttingen, 1901.

Zahrnt, Heinz, The Historical Jesus, tr. J. S. Bowden, New York, Harper & Row, 1963. First German edition, 1960.

Part II

Essays, Articles and Reviews

- Anderson, Hugh, "Existential Hermeneutics - Features of the New Quest," from Interpretation, April, 1962.
- Bultmann, Rudolf: "The Problem of Hermeneutics," ZTK, 47, 1950, pp. 47-69. Found in translation in Essays: Philosophical and Theological, tr. J. C. G. Greig, pp. 234-261.
- _____, "The Study of the Synoptic Gospels" tr. F. C. Grant, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1962; in book entitled: Form Criticism, pp. 11-76.
- Conzelmann, Hans, "The Method of the Life-of-Jesus Research," lecture May 1959. Found in translation in Braaten & Harrisville ed., The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ, pp. 54-68.
- Dahl, Nils Alstrup, "The Problem of the Historical Jesus," Oslo 1953, Found in translation in Braaten & Harrisville ed., Kerygma & History, pp. 138-171.
- Ebeling, Gerhard: "The Significance of the Critical Historical Method For Church and Theology in Protestantism," ZTK 47, 1950. Found in translation in word and Faith, pp. 17-61.
- _____, "The Question of the Historical Jesus and the Problem of Christology," ZTK 56, 1959. Found in translation in Word & Faith, pp. 288-304.
- _____, "Jesus and Faith," ZTK 55, 1958. Found in translation in Word & Faith, pp. 201-246.
- Fuller, R. H., Review of J. M. Robinson's A New Quest of the Historical Jesus, ATR, 1959.
- Harvey, Van A., and Schubert M. Ogden, "How New is the 'New Quest of the Historical Jesus'?", ZTK, 59, 1962. Found in translation in Braaten and Harrisville ed., The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ, pp. 197-242.

Käsemann, Ernst: "Das Problem des historischen Jesus," 1953. Found in Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen, Erster Band; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960, pp. 187-214.

_____, "Zum Thema der urchristlichen Apokalyptik," ZTK 59, 1962, Heft 3, Feb. 1963, Tübingen: Paul Siebeck.

Muilenburg, James: "Preface to Hermeneutics," Journal of Biblical Literature, 1958, vol. LXXVII, March. First article in series entitled: "Problems in Biblical Hermeneutics."

Robinson, James M.: "The Historical Jesus and the Church's Kerygma," in Religion and Life, 1956.

_____, Review: Jesus of Nazareth, Bornkamm, in Journal of Biblical Knowledge, 1957.

Stendahl, Krister: "Implications of Form-criticism and Tradition-Criticism for Biblical Interpretation," in Journal of Biblical Literature, 1958, vol. LXXVII, March. Third article in series entitled: "Problems in Biblical Hermeneutics."

_____, "Contemporary Biblical Theology," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 1. New York & Nashville: Abington Press, 1962, pp. 418-432.